

Born Oakland, Calif., Feb. 3, 1924

1-11-56

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR TRIBUNE LIBRARY FILES

**SEE UPDATED BIOG SPRING 1966**  
(Tribune people themselves are newsworthy. In order to bring Library files up to date and to have a background of reliable and accurate information this form is being circulated. Fullest details will be appreciated. Use both sides of form if needed.)

**Check M.E.**

NAME: Morton G. H. Cathro

ADDRESS: 1818 Walnut St., Berkeley

FAMILY (Parents' names, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, children):

Father, late George R. Cathro (died Dec. 9, 1936)

Mother, Mrs. Elsie Cathro, 89 Yosemite Ave., Oakland 11.

Wife, Margaret A. Cathro, 1818 Walnut St. Berkeley 9.

Son, Jeffrey Alan Cathro, 1818 Walnut St. Berkeley 9.

Brother, Donald M. ~~H.~~ Cathro, 1022 Court St., Alameda (City of Alameda police officer)

TRIBUNE: (Present position, others held here, when came to paper, awards and honors won, etc.)

Aug. 6, 1941, hired as copy boy.

November, 1942, appointed Richmond beat reporter.

September, 1943, to December, 1945, rewrite man, feature writer.

January, 1946 to October, 1951, editor in Sunday Dept.

October, 1951, to April, 1952, picture editor. (Trib's first?)

April, 1952, assistant Sunday editor and started column, "Travelin' Light"

March 28, 1955, appointed Sunday editor.

NEWSPAPER SERVICE ELSEWHERE:

None .

PUBLISHED WORKS: (Books, Magazine articles)

(?) One small picture layout and story in national issue of PARADE Magazine

AFFILIATIONS: (Church, lodge, union, etc.)

Member, East Bay Astronomical Society; charter member of now defunct California Civic Opera Company.

PUBLIC SERVICE: (Civil Defense, Chamber of Commerce, Red Cross, etc.)

MILITARY SERVICE:

EDUCATION:

Graduate of Oakland Technical High School, June, 1941.

OTHER DATA OF INTEREST:

For what it's worth: In 1947 or '48, I originated the "Mystery Verse," a four-line jingle in which was hidden the name of a racehorse select-  
This feature ran daily during several Northern California racing ion.  
seasons. Also did straight handicapping for several seasons.



Because Tribune employees frequently make the news themselves, this form will be used to provide us with up-to-date and accurate information for all such occasions. Please complete in detail, type or print, and return to the Editorial Business Director's office.

Date Aug. 29, 1975

FULL NAME: Morton G. H. Cathro

ADDRESS: 148 Draeger Drive, Moraga, Calif. 94556

BIRTHPLACE AND DATE: Oakland, Calif., Feb. 3, 1924

DATE - LOCATION OF WEDDING: Sept. 15, 1950; St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Oakland

SPOUSE'S NAME: Margaret Anne (Contos) Cathro

CHILDREN - NAMES AND BIRTHDATES: Jeffrey Alan Cathro, Aug. 6, 1951

Robin Cathro, May 6, 1958

OTHER FAMILY (Names and addresses of parents, brothers, sisters, etc.):

Mother (widowed): Elsie A. Cathro, 89 Yosemite Ave., Oakland.

Brother: Donald M. H. Cathro, 1022 Court St., Alameda.

TRIBUNE SERVICE (Date of employment, present position, others held here, awards and honors won, etc.): Hired as copyboy Aug. 6, 1941. Now travel writer. For list of other positions with company, as well as awards and honors, see reverse.

PRE-TRIBUNE CAREER HISTORY (Similar information as above):

None, unless you count the five years I sold The Tribune, Post-Enquirer, Call-Bulletin, and S.F. News at the corner of 41st and Piedmont, every day after school from age 12 to age 17.

EDUCATION (Schools and colleges attended, graduation dates):

Graduate of Oakland Technical High School, class of June, 1941.

MILITARY SERVICE (Branch, dates, theater, medals, etc.):

None.

PUBLISHED WORKS (Books, magazine articles, etc.):

Contributed to three books. Details on reverse

AFFILIATIONS (Church, lodge, clubs, union, etc.):

None, at present.

PUBLIC SERVICE (Teaching, civic groups, political activities, etc.):

None.

PERSONAL DATA (Avocations, hobbies, spouse's career history, other areas of residence, etc.):

See reverse.



**AWARDS:** 1968: Won IWA's 29th annual newspaper travel writing competition, oldest and considered most prestigious of such contests.

1973: Won \$1,000 grand prize in 4th annual nationwide competition for best stories on cruise ship travel in the Pacific, sponsored by Trans-Pacific Passenger Conference (now Pacific Cruise Conference).

1972: Certificate of Excellence (second place) in annual nationwide travel writing competition sponsored by Pacific Area Travel Association, for best stories on the Pacific basin.

1964: Runner-up in similar PATA contest.

**HONORS:** Elected to board of directors and as treasurer, Society of American Travel Writers (SATW). Elected chairman, western chapter. Appointed chairman of society's nominating committee (only time such post held by other than an ex-president). Helped formulate society's code of ethics.

**BOOKS:** Two columns reprinted in anthology, 'Around the World With the Experts', edited by Richard Joseph of Esquire, published by Doubleday, 1970. My article on British Columbia in Westways Magazine reprinted in textbook by Macmillan (1968), 'College Reading and Writing.' Book contains 36 essays, including ones authored by (blush): E. B. White, H. D. Thoreau, Henry Steele Commager, S. I. Hayakawa, Adlai Stevenson. Contributed chapter on Virginia City, Montana, to 'Exploring the Unknown West,' published 1975 by Ward Ritchie Press, L. A.

**PERSONAL:** Member of 1957 world champion barbershop harmony chorus, The Californians, of Berkeley Chapter, Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBS&SA). (600 chapters, 30,000 members, annual competition before 15 judges and audience of 5,000.)

Auditioned in the late 40s for Kurt Herbert Adler, then chorus director of the San Francisco Opera Co. Was accepted but decided against joining.

Auditioned and sang on radio (once) with Russ Morgan's Orchestra in 'big band' era. Sang a season in the Woodminster Light Opera (chorus). Sang in choruses of three operas staged by short-lived California Civic Opera Co.

Helped train daughter Robin and her quarterhorse Poco Gitana to 1970 championship of Region 5, California State Horsemen's Association (comprising Alameda and Contra Costa counties) for junior horseshow riders. In 1971 she placed 5th in statewide competition.

(Re horses: Originated @1948 the 'Mystery Verse,' a four-line jingle disguising my race selection for the day, which The Trib published for several racing seasons.) **OTHER HOBBIES:** Horseback riding, gardening, photography, poetry.

**SPOUSE:** Retired. Her business career, interspersed with raising family, was highlighted as Deputy City Clerk for City of Oakland under well-known Gladys Murphy. Also was head of central files, Kaiser Cement & Gypsum Co., a clerk in the Identification Bureau, Oakland Police Department, and in Fingerprint Division, FBI, Washington, D.C.

MY TRIBUNE CAREER: Aug. 6, 1941, hired as copyboy. Nov., '42, reporter on Richmond beat. Sept, '43, rewrite. Jan. '46, Sunday Dept., editing and makeup. Among duties: features and photography for locally edited pages of Parade. Late '51 and early '52, named Picture Editor for six months, redesigning caption style and laying out and captioning as many as 45 photos daily. Mid '52, re-assigned to Sunday Department and was asked to start a travel page and write a travel column in conjunction with other editing/makeup. First Travelin' Light column appeared Sunday, June 1, 1952. Mid-50s, appointed assistant Sunday Editor. Late '50s, named Sunday Editor, in charge of daily and Sunday magazine pages and sections. Continued travel column. Feb., 1960: Appointed full time travel editor-writer. Have traveled @ 3/4 million miles on six continents. Column probably is the oldest continuously published travel column in U.S. newspapers. (In early 70s, with Trib's approval and on my days off, I occasionally freelanced articles under a pseudonym for: Chicago Tribune, L.A.

Times, Christian Science Monitor, Newsday, Denver Post, Kansas City Star, Dallas Morning News, Miami Herald, Cincinnati Enquirer, Cleveland Press, Toronto Star, Vancouver Sun, and others.)



NOV. 25, 1990

Dear Yai: I write the enclosed on the eve of prostate surgery. So far the prognosis is favorable.... but one never knows.

Instead of updating my bio in the files, I found it simpler to write a "10<sup>th</sup> add" for possible use if & when. Would you be kind enough to put it in my envelope?

Since I never got a line in the news columns when I retired, perhaps the Trib will be generous with this.

If nothing else, it will save research and writing time of some reporter who never heard of me anyway.

Many thanks, and God bless. Mort Catron

Suggested 10th add obit for Mort Cathro, veteran Tribune editorial department employee who retired Dec. 31, 1987 after 46 years continuous service. Born Feb. 3, 1924 in Oakland; reared Oakland and Los Gatos; resident of Moraga since 1958.

Written by himself Nov. 24, 1990 )

CONTACT :

376 - 8667

OR  
642 - 8126

From selling Tribunes at the corner of 41st Street and Piedmont Avenue as a schoolboy during the Depression, to traveling the world and writing about it as a columnist for The Tribune during the Jet Age --- such was the journalistic rags-to-riches story of Morton Cathro.

After graduating in June, 1941, from Oakland Technical High School, where he wrote a sports column for the student newspaper, Cathro joined the editorial staff of The Tribune as a \$16-a-week copyboy.

His work caught the eye of legendary city editor Al Reck, and within a year he became a reporter, at age 18, on the busy Richmond beat. Over the next four decades, he rose through the ranks to work as a rewrite man, feature writer, picture editor, Sunday editor and, finally, the paper's first travel editor/columnist.

During the World War II years, he helped cover such major stories as the Port Chicago ammunition ship explosion; the snowbound streamliner "City of San Francisco" stranded in the Sierra; launchings of Liberty ships and shakedown cruises of warships, and the unveiling of the Navy's secret weapon, the swift attack vessel known as the PT boat.

At the end of the war, accompanied by the late Tribune photographer Lonnie Wilson, Cathro described from the vantage point of a hovering Navy blimp the arrival in San Francisco Bay of Admiral "Bull" Halsey's triumphant Fifth Fleet after the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay.

It was as a globe-trotting travel editor and writer, however, that Cathro was best known.

(more)



Told in June, 1952, to create a travel page and write a weekly column as part of his Sunday editor duties, he hopped a streetcar down Broadway to H. C. Capwell's (now the Emporium) and interviewed Oakland's first travel agent, Philip Martin, who maintained offices there. Many of his subsequent Sunday columns were of that armchair-travel variety until the advent of the Jet Age in 1958.

The Golden Age of modern travel took off that year and Cathro took off with it. Assigned to cover travel full-time, Cathro over the next two decades was to journey approximately one million miles to and on six continents, to world capit<sup>a</sup>ls and remote villages, from Paris to Pago Pago and beyond.

Combining his reporter's thirst for facts with a love of music, art and history and an eye for human interest and off-beat stories, he added a sensitivity and quiet humor to inform and entertain Sunday Tribune readers for a quarter-century in his essays called "Travelin' Light."

It was one of longest-running travel columns in American newspapers.

His work won him three major awards: first place in the 29th annual TWA nationwide travel writing competition; the \$1,000 grand prize in the fourth annual Pacific Cruise Conference national competition, and the Certificate of Excellence from the Pacific Area Travel Association, representing 30 nations and island groups in the Pacific Rim.

The contests were open to newspaper and magazine writers throughout the country and were judged by deans of the journalism schools at Columbia, Stanford, and the University of Missouri.

His colleag<sup>u</sup>es in the Society of American Travel Writers elected him to the posts of treasurer, director, and ethics committee member, as well as chairman of the nominating committee. He also served as chairman of the society's Western chapter.

(more)



In his spare time Cathro occasionally free-lanced for travel magazines, as well as for many major metropolitan newspapers, and contributed articles to two anthologies and a college textbook.

Paradoxically, he was not a born wanderer at heart. He was fond of quoting Samuel Johnson: "I should like to spend the whole of my life traveling if I had another life to spend at home."

A man of many interests, Cathro as a young reporter almost opted for a career as a chorus member of the San Francisco Opera Company before deciding to stay with the newspaper business. As a hobby he organized and sang in a male quartet, and was a member of the Berkeley-Oakland chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc., when that chapter won first place in international chorus competition in 1957/

He was vocalist briefly with the Russ Morgan Orchestra at the Claremont Hotel during the Big Band era. Much later, in 1979-80, he sang with the Oakland Symphony Chorus under the late Calvin Simmons.

A lifelong lover of horses, Cathro was a member of the American Quarter Horse Association in 1969-70 when he helped coach his daughter Robin to the junior equitation championship of Region Five, California State Horsemen's Association. For The Tribune sports pages over several seasons, he handicapped races at Golden Gate Fields, Bay Meadows and the old Tanforan track by composing his daily selection in "Mystery Verse" form, challenging the reader to decipher his best bet of the day.

An avid interest in amateur astronomy led him to membership in the Eastbay Astronomical Society years before the Space Age blossomed.

Cathro is survived by his second wife, Jean Moe Cathro, director of the career center at the Haas School of Business at U.C.-Berkeley; a son, Jeff, a professional photographer/writer; his daughter Robin, and a brother, Donald Cathro, retired officer of the Alameda Police Department. Cathro's first wife, Margaret, one-time deputy city clerk of Oakland, died in an auto accident in 1980.

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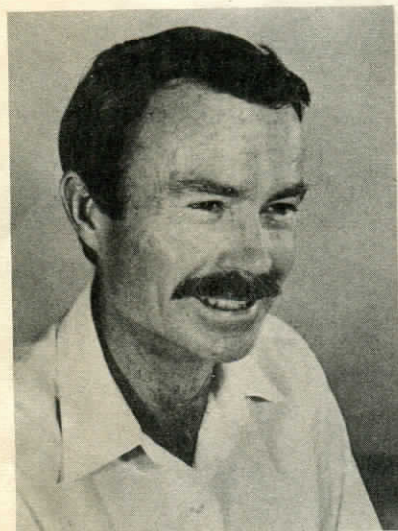


LIBRARY - FILE -

JAN. '69

## TRAVEL EDITOR OF THE MONTH

## MORT CATHRO



MORT CATHRO  
-no more moustache!

Prize-winning travel writer Morton Cathro has been a newspaperman for 27 of his 44 years, the last 16 as travel writer and editor for the Oakland Tribune. He has traveled close to a half-million miles on 5 continents to gather information and impressions for his Sunday Travelin' Light column, plus occasional freelance stories contributed to the L.A. Times, Christian Science Monitor, Chicago Trib, Denver Post and other publications. His byline is also seen from time to time in mags such as POSH and Westways.

*(travel editor, Los Angeles Times)*  
In 1966, Mort tied for first place with Jerry Hulse and Leavitt Morris in the 29th annual TWA travel writing contest. Recently, MacMillan published a new textbook, "College Reading and Writing," containing 36 essays the editors said were models of good writing. Lone travel story in the book was a reprint of Mort's Westways article on the wilds of British Columbia - and Mort found himself in the company of such erudite essayists as E.B. White, Henry D. Thoreau, Adlai Stevenson and Henry Steele Commager.

*(Travel editor, Christian Science Monitor)*

Mort sees travel writing not as nit-picking criticism or a travel-folder rundown of facts and figures, but as a broad canvas on which to paint a word picture of a place and to portray its people, their traditions, moods, foods, music and landscape. He regards a good punchline as indispensable as a good lead. This was the general theme of an article he wrote on request some time ago for the newspaper trade publication, California Publisher.

*(Society of American Travel Writers)*  
The tall, slender figure of Cathro has been a familiar one on many an inaugural flight, hotel opening and press trip. He was elected to the board of directors of the SATW in 1967, and served as national treasurer in 1968. He also has been chairman of SATW's western chapter. Although he loves the excitement of capital cities like London, Paris, Rome, Tokyo and Hong Kong, Mort seems to feel more at home where native music fills the air and he can chime in and harmonize. (Twice he nearly chose singing as a career instead of journalism.) He loves best the Caribbean with its calypsos, Mexico with its mariachis, the South Seas with its unique melodies and the wide open spaces of the American West with its own brand of music.

From Tribune copy boy, Mort Cathro progressed through the positions of reporter, rewrite, feature writer, picture editor and Sunday editor. A native of Oakland, he lives in the Eastbay suburb of Moraga. He says the best part of traveling is the coming home. When not at his typewriter, he likes to pursue his hobbies of music, gardening and horseback riding over the green, rolling hills that surround his home. Incidentally, that moustache no longer adorns Mort's upper lip. His 10-year-old daughter, Robin, wanted it off and in an unguarded moment Mort said: "OK, when you win your first blue ribbon in a horse show, I'll shave it off." The other day, Robin went out, took first place in Western equitation and Mort kept his word.

(Distributed to travel trade by Loew's Inc., New York City)



# Writing Award

DEC 21 1966

The Tribune travel writer Mort Cathro today was named a winner of the oldest and one of the most coveted national travel writing awards — the TWA Annual Writing and Picture Competition.

The 29th edition of the contest resulted in a three-way tie in the air travel-tourism category among Cathro, Jerry Hulse, travel editor of the Los Angeles

Times, and Leavitt Morris, travel editor of the Christian Science Monitor.

Contest results were announced in New York by TWA vice president Gordon Gilmore.

Presentation of a check for \$100 and a silver commemorative bowl to Cathro will be made by Gilmore at an awards banquet in Phoenix, Ariz.

The Tribune writer's entry was a series of Sunday columns written early this year following trips to Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, and Hawaii.

Judges were John Foster Jr., professor of journalism and director of advanced programs of the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University; Frederic E. Merwin, director of the School of Journalism at Rutgers University, and E. O. Cocke, TWA senior vice president.

## LONG SERVICE

Cathro is the first Northern California winner of the award since 1959. Last year's newspaper winner was Kermit Holt, travel editor of the Chicago Tribune. Winners in the magazine classification in 1965 were Richard Joseph of Esquire and Michael Frome of Holiday.

Cathro is a 25-year veteran of The Tribune staff. His Travelin' Light column has been a regular feature for the last 14 years, during which he has traveled more than 200,000 miles on five continents. In 1963, he was run-

nerup in a nationwide travel writing contest sponsored by the 21 countries in the Pacific Area Travel Association. Elected this fall to the board of directors of the Society of American Travel Writers, Cathro resides in the Eastbay with his wife Margaret and their children, Jeff and Robin.

# Who A

DEC 12 1975

Mort Cathro's name and face have appeared in The Tribune each Sunday for more than 20 years, with his national award-winning Travelin' Light column. Since joining The Trib in 1941, he also has been a reporter, feature writer, picture editor and feature editor.

Now he's the paper's entertainment editor, responsible for the revised weekend Entertainment section and the daily television and theater pages.

You'll see the touch of his professional and artistic skills in the new entertainment coverage in The Trib.



Mort

## Cathro Travel Writers' Treasurer

OCT 4 - 1967

Special to The Tribune

ISTANBUL — Tribune travel writer Mort Cathro has been elected national treasurer of the Society of American Travel Writers by some 275 society members holding their 12th annual convention in Turkey.

The society is made up of travel editors and writers for major publications in the United States, Canada, and

Mexico. Elected president was Robert S. Kane of New York, author of the best-selling "A to Z" travel guidebooks. New vice president is Bill Hughes of the Cleveland Press.

Cathro, whose Travelin' Light column has been a regular feature of The Tribune for 15 years, currently serves on the society's board of directors and is chairman of the West Coast chapter.



# 'New Look' Tour by Western Writers

Editors, writers and columnists from throughout the West will converge on Oakland tomorrow for a half-day tour of the city's attractions.

The tour is part of the "Discover the New Look of Oakland" program being carried on by the newly reformed Convention and Visitors' Bureau of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

"Part of the three-day annual meeting of the Western Chapter of the Society of American Travel Writers being held in San Francisco, the Oakland tour will be the first time in Oakland's history that such an outstanding group, responsible for influencing the travel plans of millions of people, will have had a chance to see first hand the sights and sounds that are Oakland and the Eastbay," said Hartly Kruger, manager of the bureau.

Guests will include Kermit Holt, travel editor of the Chicago Tribune and national president of the Society of American Travel Writers. Other editors and writers are from Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada

and Washington as well as California.

Mort Cathro, Oakland Tribune travel writer and chairman of the Western Chapter of SATW, is in charge of convention arrangements.

"We are attempting to expose as much of Oakland and the Eastbay as we possibly can for the travel writers to see," Kruger said. "It's their views and impressions that people all over this country read and consider before planning a trip or convention."

The group will visit the Oakland Museum, the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Complex, Lakeside Park, the Mormon Temple and Knowland Park. They will motorcade through the East Oakland hill area and wind up the tour with a luncheon at the Sea Wolf restaurant in Jack London Square.

Business and civic leaders as well as persons directly connected with the travel industry will attend the luncheon. Honored guests will include Mayor John H. Reading and William F. Knowland, president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

# New Honor For Travel Writer

Tribune travel writer Morton Cathro has been awarded a Certificate of Excellence in the annual nationwide travel writing contest sponsored by the Pacific Area Travel Association.

Results were announced in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, by F. Marvin Plake, PATA's executive director. PATA is holding its 21st annual conference there.

Cathro's award — which amounts to second place in the category of Best Newspaper Series — is for a two-part series of articles in The Tribune about Americans moving to Australia.

In 1963 Cathro won a similar runner-up award from PATA. In 1966, he won first prize in the 29th annual travel writing competition sponsored by Trans World Airlines.

This year's first-place winners of the PATA contest include Kermit Holt, travel editor of the Chicago Tribune, and David Butwin, travel editor of Saturday Review.

Five Certificates of Excellence were awarded. Besides Cathro, recipients included W. E. Garrett of National Geographic Magazine, and E. J. Kahn Jr. for an article in Travel & Leisure Magazine.

The judges' panel included Earl English, dean emeritus of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, and Lyle M. Nelson, chairman of Stanford University's Department of Communications.

PATA is the travel promotion arm of 28 nations and island groups in the Pacific basin.

Cathro's "Travelin' Light" column is one of the longest-running travel columns in American newspapers, having appeared exclusively in The Tribune every Sunday since 1952. His article today is about Tucson, Ariz., and begins on Page 25.

# Tribune's Cathro Wins Prize

Morton Cathro, The Tribune's travel editor and writer, today won the grand prize of \$1,000 in the fourth annual nationwide writing competition for the best articles about cruise ship travel in the Pacific.

It is the fourth major travel writing award won by Cathro and the second in the past 18 months.

The competition was sponsored by the Trans-Pacific Passenger Conference, which represents 12 cruise ship lines

**Cathro's column will be found on Page 25.**

sailing from West Coast ports. Judges were Paul Speegle, San Francisco author, critic, lecturer and editor; Mrs. Shirley Fockler, editor of Pacific Travel News trade magazine, and Richard Dillon, best-selling author.

Previous winners have been Richard Joseph of New York, syndicated columnist of Esquire Magazine; Stanton Delaplane, syndicated columnist of the San Francisco Chronicle, and magazine writer Dolly Connelly of Port Townsend, Wash.

Cathro, whose Sunday column has appeared in The Tribune since 1952, submitted five articles written in the past year. They included "Confessions of a Cruise Directress," a description of the debut of the Royal Viking Star, a "Voyage to Nowhere" on the Spirit of London, and two stories on the amenities of ship travel.

Cathro is a native of Oakland and resident of Moraga. In 1966 he won the grand prize in the 29th annual national travel writing competition sponsored by Trans World Airlines. Early last year he was awarded the Certificate of Excellence in the national contest sponsored yearly by the Pacific Area Travel Association, which represents some 30 nations and islands in the Pacific Basin. In 1963 he was first runner-up in the same PATA contest.



# Two Cathro Columns in New Book

SEP 27 1970

Tribune travel writer Mort Cathro is represented by two articles in a new book published this week in New York by Doubleday & Co.

"Around the World With the Experts" is a collection of 70 stories by 51 authors, all members of the Society of American Travel Writers. Cathro is a former officer and board member on SATW, and past chairman of its western chapter.

Edited by Richard Joseph of Esquire Magazine, the book describes both the famous and out-of-the-way places remembered best by the authors on their many journeys around the world. All articles are reprints of stories originally appearing in newspapers and magazines.

Both articles by Cathro are prize winners. "Under the Wide and Starry Sky of Samoa" was one of a series on the South Pacific which won him America's top travel writing award in 1966, the 29th annual Trans World Airlines competition.

"I Remember Hawaii, Loveliest Land of All" took second place in the annual nationwide competition sponsored by the Pacific Area Travel Association.

The book sells for \$8.95 at leading stores.



# Tales from the cityroom

SUN SEP - 8 1991

By Merton Catthro  
Special to the Tribune

BIO FILE

**E**ARLY ON A Wednesday morning just over 50 years ago, a 17-year-old lad, lunchbag in hand and trepidation in his heart, boarded the No. 10 streetcar at Piedmont and Yosemite avenues and headed for downtown Oakland.

The date was Aug. 6, 1941. I was that lad and I was going to be a newspaperman.

With little more than determination, a diploma from Oakland Technical High School and a fistful of my "Mort's Sports" columns in the Tech Scribe News as credentials, I reported to the city desk of the Oakland Tribune promptly at 7 a.m. as the paper's new \$16-a-week copyboy.

That first day and the weeks and years that followed were a cacophony that still rings loud and clear in memory: The cityroom clatter of a dozen rewrite men at their Underwoods, playing a raucous counterpoint to the chatter of the AP and UP teletype machines; telephones jangling with furious urgency; the clang of the firebell and blare of the police radio; editors shouting "BOY" and urging on writers as if they were racehorses straining for the finish line.

## Six editions

In those days, when the Tribune was the afternoon newspaper and street sales were a big part of circulation, six daily editions were printed, with fast-developing stories demanding new leads, inserts and updates.

One didn't have hours or days to polish one's prose — one had minutes to get out the paper before the competition (the Post-Enquirer, the California Bulletin, the San Francisco News, all big afternoon dailies) beat you to it.

Understandably, this pressure-cooker atmosphere was

See CITYROOM, Page D-22



Continued from Page D-4

enough to drive a man to drink, and many Tribune reporters and editors could hold their own with the celebrated characters in "The Front Page." Most waited until the last edition, the 6 p.m. Sportsman's Final, was put to bed before hurrying across the street to the bar.

Others needed almost hourly infusions. One of my first duties as copyboy, in fact, was to quietly slip out to the liquor store at 12th and Franklin several times a day and buy City Editor Al Reck a half-pint of Old Quaker bourbon (80 cents) and stash it behind a tank of film developer in the photographers' darkroom. Reck, star reporter Johnny Noble and several other staff members would make periodic, groping forays into the darkroom, ostensibly to examine incoming wire photos.

Late one afternoon, when all the reporters had gone home, a "187" call suddenly crackled over the police radio by the city desk. Reck looked around, saw a lone copyboy and ordered him to get going with photographer Keith Dennison. A deranged father, after a domestic argument, had driven his two small sons into the Montclair hills and beaten them to death by striking their heads against a concrete curb.

By the time Denny and I arrived, police had captured the murderer and shackled him to a patrol car. Veteran Denny got his pictures and a callow youth of 17 got his first taste of the unspeakable side of the glamorous newspaper business.

### Noble's efforts

The memo I wrote about the awful deed was incorporated into Noble's story the next morning, and apparently put me in contention for the next opening in the reporter ranks. Noble, by the way, a cocky and not altogether popular staff member, nonetheless was the man assigned each day to the top Page 1 story. Under extreme deadline pressure, he wrote with exceptional speed, clarity and precision. Never once, in 15 months of delivering his "takes" of typewritten pages to the city desk and thence to the copy desk, did I

crew, to pilot cameraman Lonnie Wilson and me over the flo-

see a row of Xs or words crossed out. His copy was clean. He was the consummate rewrite man.

On a November day in 1942, Reck beckoned to me. "Hey, kid. Wanna learn the Richmond beat?" My break had come. I had been working out for the sports department, but Sports Editor Art Cohn had no openings. So I jumped at Richmond and the raise to \$22 a week.

(Cohn, a brilliant, acerbic columnist with a big following among Trib readers, soon left the paper to become a World War II correspondent. After the war, Hollywood called and he wrote the screenplay for Michael Todd's "Around the World in Eighty Days." He died in the same plane crash that took Todd's life, riding in the seat that was to have been occupied by Todd's wife, Elizabeth Taylor.)

Now all of 18, the kid from Tech High sat at an antique roll-top desk in the Tribune's Richmond "bureau" — a dingy upstairs room in the office of the Richmond Record-Herald, circulation 300. There followed a hectic year of covering police court, fires, accidents, suicides, explosions, city council meetings and routine launchings of Liberty ships — one every four days at the Kaiser shipyards. Richmond burgeoned from 10,000 to 100,000 people almost overnight as America's war ef-

al garden-variety hack.

Early on, my mentor was Fea-

fort gathered steam.

Reck, an insomniac, hounded his news sources and his reporters at all hours. It was not uncommon for the phone to ring at home at 3 a.m. and hear his voice ask, for example, "Hey, kid, what about that fire?"

"Uh, what fire, Al?"

"The one on your beat. Roosevelt (High) is burning down. Better get out there." Click. I did, and it was.

### Tuned in to the boss

The way Reck kept his staff on its collective toes led reporter-guitarist Jack Williamson to pen a clever and affectionate song, which became a fixture at staff parties. Each verse ended with the description of a big breaking story and Reck's fearful cry that it wasn't being covered: "While you were foolin' around" went one verse, "the City Hall fell down — Jeeze Chris' Kid, Where the Hell You Been?"

There really wasn't much time for fooling around, however, with often as many as 15 or 20 stories a day for each rewrite man to handle. The Tribune in the late '40s and '50s boasted the fourth-largest news "hole" of any daily in America, surpassed only by the august New York Times, Los Angeles Times and

See CITYROOM, Page D-23



Continued from Page D

Miami Herald in the amount of column inches devoted to news and features.

Other editors besides Reck kept the heat on. The staff lived in fear of a sometimes lovable, aging red-haired tyrant named Stanley Norton, who could be gentle and fatherly one minute and an outraged bully the next: "ACCURACY! ACCURACY!" he would bellow at a hapless rewrite man who had goofed.

I was in interesting company: Noble; Furious Fred Monteagle, our ace crime reporter; super-meticulous Hal Risdon; speedy veteran Frank Wootten, who soon went into the Navy; and three genuine newswomen: Virginia Dennison, Elinor Hayes and chain-smoking Maggie Birch.

Among the bigger stories I covered or helped cover were the Port Chicago ammunition ship explosion in which 322 died; the snowbound streamliner City of San Francisco, with hundreds of passengers, trapped in the Sierra; the unveiling of the Navy's secret weapon, the PT boat; the shakedown voyage of the cruiser USS Oakland; and the death of President Roosevelt.

And then there was VJ Day. The great siren atop the Tribune Tower, silenced during the war from its accustomed daily signaling of the noon hour, let forth a mighty blast at 4 p.m. that mid-August day in 1945, when President Truman announced Japan's surrender. I immediately rode the elevator 20 stories up to the top of the Tower to observe the scene below.

Hundreds of shoppers came pouring out of Walgreen's, the Owl Drug Store, Kress's, and Foster's cafeteria, which occupied the corners of 13th and 14th streets at Broadway before the current high-rise era. People literally began dancing in the streets.

When Adm. Bull Halsey's triumphant Fifth Fleet came steaming into San Francisco Bay after the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay, Reck dispatched Noble and Dennison on a launch to board the flagship. He stationed reporter Hayes Hunter and cameraman Caral Bigelow on the Golden Gate Bridge. He commandeered a Navy blimp, complete with

crew, to pilot cameraman Lonnie Wilson and me over the flossilla. Yep, we covered stories from all angles in those days and got more than our share of exclusives.

Seeking surcease from the pell-mell life of the city room (which required consumption of two packs of Pall Mall cigarettes a day), I applied for my own greener pastures in the Features Department in the late '40s. There was copy editing, layout and the fascination of hot-type composing room make-up to learn.

## The roll call

Over the ensuing decades I worked with a different, mostly kinder and gentler breed of newsman and woman: Genial Jack Burroughs, World War I buddy of Harold Ross, founder of The New Yorker; soft-spoken music critics Jack Mason, Clifford Gessler, Paul Hertelendy and Charles Shere; drama critics Dennis Powers and John Rockwell (who later went to ACT and The New York Times, respectively); TV columnist Bob MacKenzie of current Channel 2 fame; art critics H.L. Dungan and his daughter, Miriam Dungan Cross; talented staff artists and true gentlemen Frank Kettlewell and Ray Marta; erudite book reviewers, human-interest specialists, caustic columnists, garden writers and an occasion-

al garden-variety hack.

Early on, my mentor was Features Editor Walter Bodin, a hot-tempered French Canadian who not infrequently showed up for work with two black eyes suffered in saloon brawls. ("I slipped on a spot of grease getting off the Key System train," was his standard explanation for his bruised condition.)

Walter, winding down his career after stints as night city editor with the AP and the New York Post, introduced me to such diverse authors, poets and iconoclasts as John Donne, Ernest Renan, H.L. Mencken, Edward Fitzgerald of Rubaiyat fame, Bertrand Russell and The New Yorker's E.B. White. Walter respected the written word, but suspected it as well.

To him, a story or theory was false until proven true, and he always examined both sides of an issue. "If you want to learn to write," he would say, "read!"

■ ■ ■

Morton Cathro retired Dec. 31, 1987, after 46 years and five months on the Tribune staff. He served as copyboy, cub reporter, rewrite man, feature writer, picture editor, Sunday editor and award-winning travel editor/columnist. As a schoolboy during the Depression, he sold Tribunes at the corner of 41st and Piedmont. He resides in Moraga.



# The wild joy of V-J Day recalled

WED AUG 14 1985

By Janet Ghent  
The Tribune

Downtown Oakland was a sea of calendar papers and serpentine. At rush hour, the Posey Tube between Oakland and Alameda was the scene of a massive traffic tie-up, with horns blowing so intensely that guards were prevented from doing their jobs. And in San Francisco, between 20,000 and 30,000 people flooded Market Street during the height of a celebration marked by bonfires in the middle of the thoroughfare.

At 4 p.m. Aug. 14, 1945, President Truman announced the end of the war with Japan and the Bay Area went wild. Sailors exchanged hats with civilians and kissed civilian women. Civilian men kissed WACS and WAVES and citizens rejoiced in a celebration that continued until morning.

Veteran Tribune editor and writer Morton Cathro was a reporter-rewrite man at the time. The city editor assigned Cathro to "go out and get a color story." Cathro's first move was to take the elevator to the top of the Tribune Tower to get a bird's-eye view of the whole scene below.

"Promptly at 4 o'clock, The Tribune's rooftop siren — which could be heard for miles — went off," recalled Cathro. "I was nearly deafened, being so close." (The siren, which was sounded regularly every day at noon during

the pre-war years, had been silenced during World War II, to be used only in the case of an air raid or to signal momentous news.)

"Looking down at the intersection of 13th and Broadway, I saw shoppers swarming out of the stores," he said. "Within seconds, the streets were jammed with people shouting and cheering, as the siren played a joyous counterpoint."

"There were streetcars on Broadway and Telegraph in those days, and they literally were stopped in their tracks."

Cathro descended to the lobby and began making his way around the block bounded by 13th and 14th streets, Franklin and Broadway, getting quotes and reactions from the throng of celebrators.

"By the time I returned to The Tribune building, I was ankle-deep in desk calendar leaves, papers and serpentine, tossed from office windows as if it were New Year's Eve," he said. "The streets were covered with paper within minutes. People had been waiting a long time for this moment, and when it came they really let off steam."

Rachel Wilshire, of Orinda, a retired social worker who worked for the Red Cross during the war, was headquartered in San Francisco's Civic Auditorium.

"We opened all the doors of the entire auditorium and all walked out when we heard the news," said Wilshire.

"Oh my goodness. All the streetcars were off the road, the streets were closed to traffic and there were just

See JOY, Page D-2



Continued from Page 1  
crowds of navy blue and people.  
Generals and captains were hanging  
men in the street."

Burton Weber, special events coordinator for Oakland's Office of Parks and Recreation, lived in Oakland and was working in the personnel office at Kaiser Permanente shipyards in Richmond.

"Not much work got done the rest of the day," he said. "It was a time of intense rejoicing and letting go of tension."

That evening, he attended a prayer service at the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland at 27th and Broadway.

"It was an impromptu thing, but it was one of the most moving spiritual experiences I've had," said Weber. "There was a quiet outpouring of joy."

For Rose and Arthur Chamberlin, then living in Oakland, Aug. 14, 1945 was a doubly spe-

cial day. At 4:08 p.m. Rose Chamberlin had planned to name her daughter Dianna Rose, but the doctor had other plans.

"He said he stopped the war by delivering the baby, so he named her Victoria," said Rose Chamberlin, who now lives in Fremont.

The Chamberlins decided to go along with the doctor's whim. When Victoria Rose was 19 hours old, photographers and reporters went to Providence Hospital to report on the new victory baby.

But as the anniversary of V-J Day, known in her family as Victoria Day, arrives, Victoria Rose Chamberlin Wescott, of Fremont, has other things on her mind.

"I hit 40," she said dolefully.



# Straight from the horse

SUN AUG 11 1991

## Author gets the inside track on thoroughbred racing world

BOOKS

**A BREED APART: The Horses and the Players**

By Mike Helm  
Henry Holt, \$22.50

By Morton Catthro  
Special to the Tribune

"NEXT TO MAN," wrote Leonardo da Vinci, "the horse is God's noblest creation."

The horse indeed is a noble creature, a breed apart from the rest of us in the animal kingdom. Although he lives less intimately with his master than does the dog, for example, and is considered inferior in intelligence, the horse is the subject of a far larger body of literature.

The thoroughbred racehorse in turn, stands apart from his lesser publicized, but no less noble equine breeds. The names of such immortals as Man O'War, Seabiscuit, Whirlaway, Citation, Swap (who set or equaled six world records) and Secretariat (who may have been the greatest that ever lived) are household words in many a household that never has gone to the races.

Those who do go to the races also are a breed apart, as the subtitle to Berkeley writer Mike Helm's book suggests. Fascinated by the beauty, courage, character, competitiveness and sheer speed of these magnificent beasts, the horseplayer goes to the track to watch these athletic contests among horses. By wagering on the outcome, he throws himself into the very thick of what truly is a participant's sport.

Ha! you say. Horse racing isn't

a sport. Horse manure! you cry. Horseplayers aren't participants, they're just gamblers.

Well, any fool can "play" the lottery by stabbing at six numbers and praying to beat odds of 23-million-to-1. And it doesn't take much brainpower to take or give the points while guessing whether Joe Montana is going to have a good or bad day on the gridiron. Playing the stock market is considered by many a cynic to be little more than gambling dressed up in the respectable cloak of investment by people who want to have their cake and eat it, too.

The horseplayer, on the other hand, is willing to take risks because of the irresistible challenge of pitting his own knowledge and wisdom against that of 10,000 other people at the track.

It is this art of handicapping a race — weighing the myriad factors surrounding each contestant, such as class, speed, consistency, fitness, distance, jockey, trainer, weight carried, conformation, track variant, bloodlines — that sets the horseplayer apart from the flip-a-coin gambler.

By backing their judgments with wagers against one another, horseplayers actually determine the final odds in the pari-mutuel betting. Thus, they are true participants in one of the world's oldest sports. (The first known horse races, by the way, were held some 3,350 years ago.)

Two important events have taken place recently to put East-bay horse racing back in the spotlight. (Eighty years ago the big racetrack at Emeryville was the track on the West Coast.)

One event is the creation of Oaktown Stables by rap star



M.C. Hammer and his family, whose heavy investments in quality runners have brought them instant nationwide fame as owners of the best 3-year-old filly in America, Lite Light.

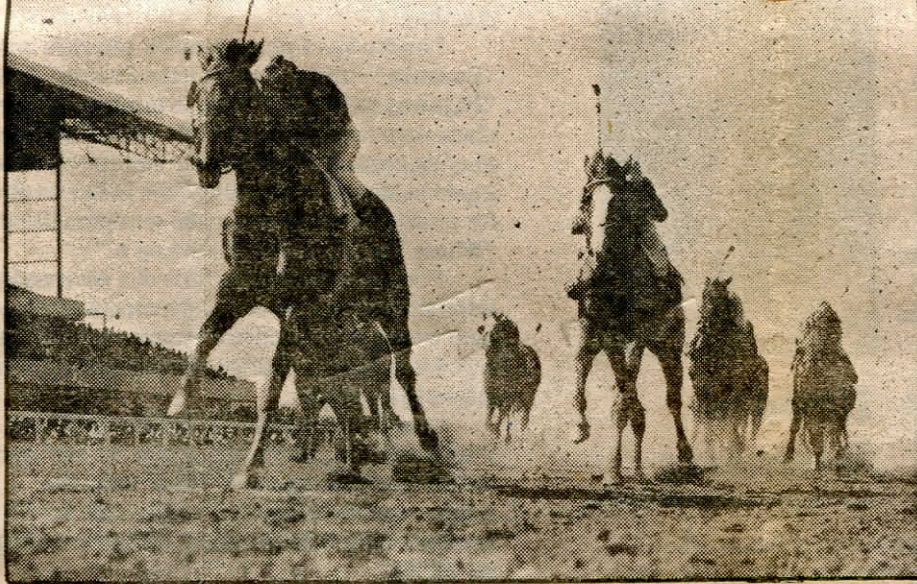
The second event is publication of Helm's book "A Breed Apart," which examines the sport from flagfall to finish and belongs in every horse lover's library.

We have books on the history of racing, its greatest horses, breeding, handicapping, betting systems and so on. But Helm has hit the winner's circle with an incisive, in-depth reporting job that ties together in one volume all the elements — all the players, if you will — that make up the cast of the great sporting drama that is racing.

### Numerous interviews

The setting is Golden Gate Fields in Albany. Helm interviews owners, veterinarians, stewards, track maintenance





Tribune file photo

**A day at Golden Gate Fields:**  
Despite what many think, horse racing is a participant's sport. A player banks on his knowledge of a horse — his speed, bloodline, consistency, jockey and trainer.

M.C. Hammer and his family, whose heavy investments in quality runners have brought them instant nationwide fame as owners of the best 3-year-old filly in America, *Life Light*.

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The setting is Golden Gate Fields in Albany. Helm interviews owners, veterinarians, stewards, track maintenance

men, racing secretaries and grooms on the backstretch.

Well-known trainers such as Bill Morey Jr. (half his horses regularly finish in the money) and Chuck Jenda (trainer of Brown Bess, winner of racing's equivalent of the Oscar, the Eclipse award), talk freely and revealingly of the pleasures and pains of their profession.

There is a lengthy interview with top jockey Jack Kaenel, another familiar name to local fans, who gained fame in 1982 by riding Preakness Stakes winner *Aloma's Ruler*. Listen to Kaenel give a race-riding lesson:

"You don't interfere with the natural movement and stride of the horse, you just try and time your own movements in a way that gives a horse its best balance and efficiency in its stride ... What you're trying to do by picking a horse's head up is allow their front legs to catch up and extend in front of their neck and head. That way they can have a longer reach in their front stride and run faster."

Horses aren't machines, as Chief Steward Leon Lewis reminds us:

"There's no place in the rules that says this is a non-contact sport. There's almost always some contact leaving the gate. Horses don't run in a totally straight line. If you wanted to watch every little detail, you could have an inquiry on almost every race."

To those who decry the injuries, a track vet responds: "Race horses are going to break down and go lame because they are fragile animals."

## Injuries happen everywhere

He could have added that the casualty rate at the farms probably is as high as at the track. Thousand-pound animals romping in paddocks on those slender legs regularly suffer broken

bones or pulled ligaments or worse. Even in their stalls they're not safe. Last year *Alydar*, a champion sire worth tens of millions, had to be destroyed after injuring himself in his luxury box at Calumet Farm in Lexington.

It's as if these injury-prone creatures are fated to pay dearly for their nobility.

As for the jockeys, who pound for pound may well be the finest of all athletes, they all take spills and most of them bounce back from injuries because of their superb physical condition. This reviewer's cousin, a champion jockey in New Zealand and later one of that country's leading trainers, survived fractures of both shoulders, both arms and both legs in many a spill, only to be done in on his farm by a weanling that kicked him in the chest.

Veteran horseplayers are also interviewed at length in Helm's book. Some of them are probably fictional, with Runyonesque names such as *The Stone*, *Ronnie Beau*, *Frisco* and *Panama*. One of them, an overly erudite comments, mixed with a liberal sprinkling of trackside lingo, are merely a vehicle to reflect the author's own thoughts on picking winners.

But that's a minor quibble. Helm, after all, is a horseplayer by birth, and should be heard along with the other real-life experts. Anyone born on the day his father cashed a winning trifecta (the horses' names were *Blue Booties*, *Tell Me Now* and *It's a Boy*) deserves to cash a big ticket of his own. Perhaps this book is it.

Retired Tribune writer and editor Morton Cathro, as a teenage fan 50 years ago, cashed a winning ticket in the very first race at Golden Gate Fields. For two seasons in the late 1940s he was a handicapper for the newspaper at that track as well as *Tanforan* and *Bay Meadows*.



# The fine art of travel

FRI JUL 3 1992

By **Morton Cathro**  
Special to The Tribune

East Bay residents staying close to home this summer can make a vicarious visit to Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Mount Shasta, the Russian River and other popular California travel designations virtually cost-free.

They also can view Niagara Falls, get the feel of autumn in the New England woods and take in other Eastern sites without fighting big crowds or spending big bucks.

All this can be had for the price of a couple of gallons of gas or BART and bus fare to St. Mary's College in Moraga.

There, in the college's Hearst Art Gallery (admission free), an exhibition of California and Eastern landscapes by noted painters of a century ago has just opened and will continue through Aug 16.

Entitled "Bicoastal Artists of the 1870s," the display of 60 paintings features numerous oils by William Keith, Thomas Hill and Albert Bierstadt. These "Big Three" of both coasts, along with 19 other artists, offer spectacular panoramic scenes of untrammelled natural beauty, painted in the 1870s and '80s, which soon became prime tourist attractions.

In a sense, yesterday's artists were the environmentalists of their time, preserving with oil on canvas what today's nature lovers are trying to preserve by legislation and Earth Summits.

Ironically, their widely admired canvases fueled a surge of public interest in art and travel, and the pristine, unspoiled locales they depicted soon were descended upon by people eager to see for themselves the wondrous scenery.

Yosemite in particular became a hot item in the art and travel market after Enoch Wood Perry Jr., Virgil Williams and Bierstadt first set up easels there in 1865.

By the 1870s thousands of visitors were arriving at Yosemite by stagecoach or horseback from railheads in the Central Valley. An oil by James David Smillie, rendered in 1871, is entitled "Tourists on the Inspiration Point Trail, Yosemite." Perry

himself painted the Bierstadt party at Sentinel Rock, and Bierstadt is represented in the show by two Yosemite scenes as well as three other Western locales and a New Hampshire pastorate.

While Yosemite offered perhaps the most inspiring subjects for the bicoastal artists (12 of the 60 paintings are of the treasured national park), other wonders of the West and Northeast were not ignored.

Indeed, many artists who were based in San Francisco in those days also had dual headquarters in Boston, and constantly traveled back and forth on the transcontinental railroad. Often a sketch of a California scene would be finished in a Boston studio, and vice versa. Newspapers in San Francisco and Boston engaged in a lengthy tug-of-war of words, each city claiming these artists as its own.

Along with renderings of Yosemite, Tahoe, Shasta, Donner Lake and other high-country scenes, picturesque subjects of local interests in the exhibit include Stinson Beach, the Golden Gate, Mount Diablo, Mount Tamalpais, Clear Lake and Mount Konocti, Calistoga, Pacheco Pass, the Coast Range, San Rafael, San Anselmo, the Farallon Islands, and Lake Lagunita, now part of the Stanford University campus.

Today's East Bay residents will be intrigued by a pair of oils by Joachim Richardt: "Scene Showing Growth and Progress in the East Bay," and "Oaks at Madison and 8th, Oakland." Although neither bears a precise date, both are known to have been painted in the decade of the '70s when the San Francisco Bay Area was enjoying the spotlight as the art mecca of the gold-rich West.

A special glow infused art itself at the time, for the highly romanticized and detailed landscapes of the Hudson River School were rapidly fading from fashion. In their place were the pre-Impressionist paintings influenced by the Barbizon School, named for the group of French painters who gathered in a village of Barbizon in the forests of Fontainebleau near Paris.

Their work, admired and adapted by many of the bicoastal group, focused on the quality and nuances of natural light on the objects in a landscape or genre painting.

Says Ann Harlow, Hearst Gal-



lery director and curator of the show, "Travels of the Bicoastal artists, not only from coast to coast but to Europe where they studied and observed, obviously contributed to the new cosmopolitanism on both coasts. A lot of imitating, borrowing and one-upmanship went on."

Besides those already mentioned, prominent artists in the exhibition include Norton Bush, William Hahn, Herman Herzog, Julian Rix and Raymond Yeland.

Virgil Williams, one of the founders of the San Francisco Art Association (1871) and first director of the California School of Design (1874), owned a ranch on the slopes of Mount St. Helena in Napa County. It was there during a social gathering of painters and writers that Williams introduced author Robert Louis Stevenson to Oakland widow Fannie Osbourne.

After their marriage, Stevenson and Osbourne honeymooned in a cabin on William's ranch —

the cabin in which much of "The Silverado Squatters" was written.

It was also on the heavily forested slopes of the Williams ranch that Thomas Hill painted the exhibition's small, poignant oil on paper entitled "The Hill Oak." Especially timely today, more than a century later, it shows a woodcutter, ax resting on his shoulder, gazing at a towering tree bathed in radiant light.

Later, Hill was to describe the tree as "a white oak so beautiful in nature (that) I made a sketch of it which preserved it from the ax. Williams named the tree 'The Hill Oak.' I have preserved the sketch in memory of my friend for years. (signed) Thomas Hill, 1875."

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*Bicoastal Artists of the 1870s* is on view at the Hearst Gallery, St. Mary's College, Moraga. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., through Aug 16. It will be open tomorrow. Admission is free. For more information, call 631-4379.